

FORMING DEMOCRACY IN THE FACE OF AUTHORITARIANISM:
A CASE STUDY EXAMINATION OF HOW POLITICALLY
DISENFRANCHISED ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS ACHIEVE
DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNANCE

Ian Ermatinger-Salas

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Master's Thesis Committee

Aurelian Craiutu, Ph.D., Chair

Jeffrey Gould, Ph.D.

Catherine Herrold, Ph.D.

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Using a case study approach, this thesis explores how ethnic minority groups living under authoritarian rule can utilize social bonds, create social capital, and eventually achieve democratic self-governance. Social movement literature is also utilized to examine how one of the case studies, the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico should be examined as a social movement rather than a military insurgency. This thesis also examines the Kurds of Northern Iraq and then puts forward the Kurds of Northern Syria as a future case study. This thesis takes a historical analysis approach throughout as well as utilizing philanthropic studies literature.

Aurelian Craiutu, Ph.D., Chair

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0.1 Research Question and Explanation of Structure

This thesis will examine the question: *how do ethnically and politically marginalized groups form and sustain social movements to gain self-governance in the face of authoritarian or autocratic rule?* This thesis will provide a historical and political analysis to examine two particular case studies while also utilizing various conceptions of civil society, social capital, and social movements. These case studies are an analysis of the Zapatista (EZLN) movement in Mexico and an examination of the evolution of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq.

These examples offer two distinct movements, the first based on socio-economics and the second based on politics, where both represent the banding together of diverse interests in order to secure self-governance for an oppressed ethnic minority group. This thesis will examine their history, structure, and goals while also examining their place and relationships within civil society. The Zapatista movement and the ascent of the KRG are not direct parallels, and while some comparisons will be made between the two case studies, they are distinct, interesting cases with some contextual overlap.

After reviewing and analyzing these cases, this thesis will conclude with final thoughts where I reiterate that the EZLN operates with a deep, unshakable commitment to ideology while the KRG is ideologically flexible and operates in a pragmatic fashion to attain its goals. Following these final

thoughts will be a brief examination of a third group, the Syrian-Kurdish YPG. This group offers an interesting parallel to segments of both the Zapatistas and the KRG movements. The YPG will be an ideal case study once the Syrian Civil War concludes, and this section will offer a framework for future analysis.

I contend that the popular movements that have emerged and coalesced around the EZLN and the KRG should be studied and analyzed more extensively through the lens of civil society and social movements. Neither of these movements has received substantial analysis in philanthropic studies or ancillary disciplines, and the principle contribution of this thesis is demonstrating that the EZLN and KRG, distinct and different, are both important movements that deserve a deeper level of analysis. Utilizing established and foundational literature, this thesis attempts to both answer the thesis question and provide a new starting point for future examination by scholars of philanthropy and social movements.

0.2 Introduction and Civil Society Literature Review

Social movements have been key to the study of philanthropy since Alexis de Tocqueville first described how the collective action of ordinary citizens is ideal for democracy and should be encouraged by both society and the government. As this thesis utilizes civil society and social movement literature to frame both case studies, it is necessary to present and discuss existing literature. This discussion of current literature serves to present

current theories and contentions within the discipline in order to place the EZLN and KRG within the field. In both case studies, the literature initially presented here will be discussed and then later applied specifically to see if the examples of the EZLN and KRG should be included in future studies of social movement and civil society.

While the work of numerous other foundational theorists, from Charles Tilly and his repertoires of contention to Mancur Olson's rational choice theory, could be included in this review and analysis, this thesis endeavors to place these two cases studies within the literature broadly. Deep discussion of foundational theory is certainly possible, but that is outside the scope of this work and could instead be reserved for future works where each case study can be dissected with a tighter focus that applies individual theory to each case study.

Social movements are categorized as part of civil society – that “realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from government, and bound together by a legal order or set of shared rules” (Diamond, 1997, 6). Diamond's definition, while encompassing, leaves some necessary components of civil society unstated. While the modern idea of civil society that Diamond analyzes and critiques emerged in 18th-century Europe as a means for “citizens [...] to define their place in society independent of the aristocratic state” (Anheier, 2005, 54), the roots of the concept reach back to antiquity. In *The Politics*, Aristotle

attempts to present the numerous forms of government that exist and highlight the superior nature of democracy over oligarchy or tyranny. As he presents his arguments, the philosopher provides a key component of civil society, that “[...] the natures of citizens are equal, and do not differ at all” (Everson, 1996, 27).

This idea of the equality of all citizens persisted through the democratic movements that began in 18th-century Europe. The idea of equality was key to both the American and French Revolutions, where the idea that “[a]ll men are created equal” and “liberté, égalité, fraternité” became the rallying cries of popular government partisans. This equality is key to understanding civil society. Regardless of the critique or writing, scholars agree that “[c]ivil society is not a singular, monolithic, separate entity, but a sphere constituted in relation to both state and market, and indeed permeating both” (Anheier).

This sphere has no fee or requirement for entrance; rather, anyone who enters has equal standing to one another. Habermas is largely in concurrence with these definitions, offering that “[it] is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life sphere, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere” (1996, 367).

When these various understandings of civil society are taken in composite and combined with the Payton and Moody definition of philanthropy as “voluntary action for the public good,” social movements that follow Diamond’s guidelines for civil society are, by definition, part of the great Third Sector that is also described as the philanthropic sector (2008). Citizens who voluntarily engage in collective action and join social movements are thus practicing philanthropy. They are also, as Tocqueville notes, promoting democratic norms and concepts in their private lives. As individuals organize and participate in social movements, they learn about their social and political rights while also realizing through practice and interaction that, as Aristotle noted, they are entirely equal to their fellow citizens.

While social movements do not need to be democratic in nature, their horizontal structure and participatory nature inculcate democratic practices regardless of their intent. This means that individuals or organizations wishing to promote democracy and democratic values can do so by supporting social movements of all kinds, either financially or through participation. It is this participation that Tocqueville was so taken with when he visited the United States and subsequently encouraged in his writings.

An alternative to this form of engaged and democratic social movement, however, is the national citizen group. Like the participatory form of collective action, these organizations claim that they unite large

numbers of people around a common cause or interest that is typically political in nature; however, many national citizen groups are membership driven rather than participatory. This means that this form of organization gathers membership dues from a national base of supporters who claim affiliation but do not often engage actively in mass-mobilization efforts, regular member meetings, or letter writing campaign, which are all common examples of participant driven social movements. An American example of such a movement would be the Sierra Club.

As Berry notes in *The Rise of Citizen Groups*, these forms of organization are popular in nations that have representative systems of government. They will typically engage in advocacy work for the cause, i.e. lobbying politicians and bureaucrats to educate them on the cause or group they represent. Berry explains that this is natural because “most governing is done by representatives who act for us rather than by participatory institutions.” (1999, 369)

Thus, collective action mimics the political forms with which many are already familiar. This form of collective action, however, is typically an alternative to participatory social movements only when a responsive government exists that typically values the citizenry equally. In regions or nations that are still developing democratic traditions, membership based social movements might not be as effective as participatory social movements

that can better help to develop, teach, and inculcate democratic values (Verba et al. 1995).

Social movements are an ideal way for citizens to demonstrate their beliefs and preferences to political leadership. As Diamond explains “[a democratic] government must be held accountable to the people, and in which mechanisms must exist for making it responsive to their passions, preferences, and interests” (1997, 2). Social movements are one such mechanism that forces the government to be responsive. This is especially true, according to Diamond, when elections are not adequate or not truly representative of the populaces’ preferences (3).

In fact, Diamond argues that when there is a lack of democratic control for all or part of the population, “[o]nly the mass public can generate the political pressure and power necessary to bring about reform” (4). Furthermore, social movements are fundamental in the development of democracies as “[p]articipation in civil society (separate and apart from party politics) rises, and the civic quest to build democracy reaches new heights” (62).

One issue that Diamond identifies, however, is that the interest of international observers can cause NGOs, and by extension social movements, to sputter and even fail if they develop an over-reliance on international funding and then funding priorities leave them behind, resulting in a loss of financial support (*ibid*). Those that did not fail, however, were frequently

forced to adapt their mission in order to secure funding from international donors and foundations; the risk of this “adaptation diminishes the autonomy, shrinks the grassroots base, and dilutes the democratic zeal of the organization” (65).

Jenkins and Halcli seek an answer to how international funders impact social movements, asking if “[social movement philanthropy] fuel[s] social change by strengthening social movements, or is it a cooptative force that weakens and blunts the impact of organization” (1999, 229). As there are differing definitions on what makes a social movement, Jenkins and Halcli offer “a collective attempt to organize or represent the interests of a previously unorganized or politically excluded group” (230) as an operating definition for a social movement. They further describe “social movement philanthropy” as reactive in nature (*ibid*) rather than proactive, meaning that funding comes in to support an existing social movement rather than providing seed money to encourage collective action.

Further, they describe social movements as “the major spur to foundation patronage and that, due to a ‘radical-flank effect,’ this protest legitimizes moderate movement leaders, thus directing most of the money toward the less militant projects, thereby demobilizing grassroots protest” (243). On the other hand, Jenkins and Halcli argue that “[s]ocial movement philanthropy is also credited with providing critical resources for implementing social movement gains” (*ibid*). Therefore, philanthropic aid to

social movements can undermine them by coopting the message and intent of the collective action, or it can help to bolster a movement that requires resources to sustain its actions and further spread its message.

Donors and powerful players in civil society will sometimes move to subvert collective action in an attempt to maintain their control or influence. Indeed, "it is a general rule of civil society that its strongest members get stronger. The weaker and poorer members are either unable to organize at all-or they form groups that reflect their weakness and poverty" (Walzer 2002, p. 39). When citizens do organize, Archon Fung argues that these "schools of democracy because they teach their members skills-how to organize themselves, run meetings, write letters, argue issues, and make speeches-that are necessary for all manner of political action" (2003, 520).

Fung further argues that in poor areas, the citizenry often lacks the time or skills necessary to engage in collective action (527). When associations and social movements are able to form in areas with exclusionary or undemocratic practices, however, they offer an alternative to politics that do not represent specific segments of the populations. This, according to Fung, means that ethnic, indigenous, and marginalized populations who resist central political control will substitute their own autonomous, democratic forms of governance (534). While social movements might inculcate democratic practices in functioning democracies, "[i]n tyrannical contexts [...] resistance may be far more urgent than the

development of civic virtues such as toleration and respect for the rule of law (536).

Wealthy patrons and citizens participating in mobilization efforts often have competing visions for what a social movement should look like or stand for, and members of each group will struggle to define the mission and future of the group. Benford and Snow define this struggle within the context of social movements as collective action framing, where “movement actors are viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers” (2000, 613). Rather than being defined in an organic, egalitarian way, Benford and Snow contend that the process of collective action framing is deliberate and a source of struggle and contention where those opposed to the movement will work to reframe the struggle and adherents will both proactively and reactively fight to shed reframing attempts that put the movement in a negative light.

In their discussion of collective action framing, Benford and Snow define three “core framing tasks” that movement actors can utilize to build consensus and induce passive observers to join in an active way (615). The first of these tasks, diagnostic framing, seeks to define and contextualize the social problem that the movement is working for or against. Benford and Snow offer injustice frames as a primary example of diagnostic framing, where a social movement seeks to demonstrate that an injustice is being

perpetrated and must be confronted by “collective noncompliance, protest, and/or rebellion-generated and adopted by those who come to define the actions of an authority as unjust” (*ibid*).

The second of the core framing tasks, prognostic framing, “addresses the Leninesque question of what is to be done, as well as the problems of consensus and action mobilization” (616). Here the social movement actors must identify and agree upon a set of solutions that they will put forward to constituents and potential supporters in order to rectify the social issue that a movement has formed to address. In order to maintain credibility, the prognostic framing must be realistic and acceptable when presented to potential supporters; opponents of a social movement will often attack these prognoses, and movement actors must be nimble in their development and defense of the strategies and solutions that they advocate for by continually developing and defining their efforts in concrete ways (617).

The last of the core framing tasks, motivational framing, serves to create a “rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive” (*ibid*). Benford and Snow contend that the way in which activists discuss can add a sense of urgency that can induce those sympathetic to a social movement to take increasingly strong action or contribute in more meaningful ways when the vocabulary used demonstrates the urgency of action as “socially constructed

vocabularies provide[s] adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and for sustaining their participation” (*ibid*).

A fundamental part of civil society and social movements is social capital and its creation between individuals and groups. A simple, yet accurate, definition says, “social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively” (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 3). Within social capital, there are two main forms described as bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital can be “described as connecting people who are like one another in important respects while bridging networks link people who are unlike one another” (Geyes and Murdoch, 2010, 524).

Further, bridging social capital can occur within a group, which is called internal bridging, or it can occur between groups, which is called external bridging. Social capital is important vis-à-vis social movements because there must be some sort of connection that unites the people who are organizing in collective action. Further, it is also important for social movements to be made up of different groups, whether these differences are ethnic, religious, or income based, in order to appeal to a larger audience and gain legitimacy (Smith, 1998).

There is a difference of opinion, however, regarding whether social movements allow for social capital of any kind to be generated. According to Putnam, social movements should be excluded entirely from civil society, as

they often do not give room for participants to engage in the interpersonal relationship building that is critical to forming social capital (70). On the other hand, Foley and Edwards argue that this narrow conception of social movements do not take the structure of individual movements; instead, Putnam focuses on large, national membership organizations and ignores the divergent forms of collective action represented by grassroots social movements (1996).

Furthermore, Smith argues that social movements can aid in creating transnational social capital, especially now that technology allows for an easier transmission of news and ideas. This is an example of bridging social capital, though depending on the sources of the connections, philanthropists who are engaging with social movements might seek to coopt the mission or the goals of the movement.

In addition to strengthening connections between individuals and groups of people, Fukuyama argues that there is an important economic component to building social capital. He argues that the formation of social capital will “reduce the transaction costs associated with formal co-ordination mechanisms like contracts, hierarchies, bureaucratic rules, and the like” (2001, 10). Fukuyama, argues this is important because there is no way for every eventuality in a business contract to be explicitly stated; thus, the formation of norms and networks between individuals or groups results in

less of a need for these eventualities to be explicitly stated or inspected during a transaction (*ibid*).

Fukuyama further points out that social capital in developing countries is often the result of globalization. While globalization can bring new ideas to a developing nation, Fukuyama also contends that it can be a destabilizing force in that it “injures indigenous cultures and threatens long-standing traditions” (19). Fukuyama states, however, that this is balanced by the ability of organizers and revolutionaries to export their ideas to these developing areas (*ibid*).

As the impulse for democracy and personal freedoms increases in developing nations and politically marginalized areas, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi argues that collective action can control corruption. She argues that political contests are not a sufficient mechanism to control for fighting authoritarian regimes; rather, social movements can counterbalance these autocratic forms of government (2013, 102).

Mungiu-Pippidi asserts that a “virtuous combination of [values, social capital, civil society, and civic culture] enables [collective action] to overcome competing tendencies toward violence, cronyism, and social hierarchy and to generate normative constraints that empower ethical universalism” (104).

Mungiu-Pippidi also finds that states that have transitioned from authoritarian rule to democracy or self-governance in recent history began as grassroots social movements with only loose ties; however, they matured over

time as these bonds were strengthened, and the movements succeeded in becoming a democratic institution (110).

Finally, Debra Minkoff argues that many scholars of civil society overlook the importance of social movements (1997, 606). Rather, Minkoff argues that social movements “play a critical role in civil society and the production of social capital by providing an infrastructure for collective action, facilitating the development of mediated collective identities that link otherwise marginalized members of society, and shaping public discourse and debate” (*ibid*).

As previously discussed, social movements are an ideal way for marginalized groups to engage in collective action, construct social capital between individual participants and associated groups, and form a collective identity. Often, a diverse coalition of interests that have similar goals and interests coalesce to form a movement. But Minkoff cautions “the diffuse nature of such social ties limits available social capital and organizational capacities, consequently constraining political effectiveness” (607). This belies the difficulty of maintaining a successful social movement in the face of varied coalition interests and emphasizes the importance of generating bridging social capital between the various participant groups and their members.

0.3 Zapatista Case Study Literature Review

Although the case study covering the Zapatista movement will be grounded and in part analyzed based on the previously discussed literature that defines and discusses civil society, social capital, and social movements, this thesis will also utilize a number of books, articles, and primary source documents that were released by or discuss the EZLN.

Although the Zapatistas represent a relatively small social movement and are essentially confined geographically to a single, remote state in Mexico, there have been a number of insightful works centered on the movement and its goals. These analyses form an important and diverse collection of literature that this thesis will draw on extensively. Another key source of information for this case study is the EZLN itself. Each year, dozens of Zapatista communiqués are released to the public and offer a unique insight into the stated goals, ideology, and structure of the movement. These announcements will be utilized.

Gilbreth and Otero argue that the Zapatista movement emerged at a pivotal moment in modern Mexican history and fundamentally altered the trajectory of the country (2001). Just as the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) celebrated the implementation of the single largest neo-liberal trade agreement, NAFTA, they were confronted with a wave of anger and dissatisfaction. This opposition manifested itself in the

Zapatista National Liberation Army, more widely known as the Zapatista movement or the EZLN.

Composed of “primarily Mayan peasants, both members and sympathizers of the [EZLN], and their national and international supporters,” (7) this social movement erupted onto the international scene on January 1, 1994 with a dozen days of intense fighting before a ceasefire was called. Gilbreth and Otero contend that, unlike previous uprisings, this was not a political party masquerading as a movement. They differentiate the two, arguing that “[t]he key difference is that political parties have focused their efforts on reforming political society from within while the EZLN has interpellated civil society to push for democratization from the bottom up” (*ibid*).

In his examination of the formation of social capital in Mexico, Jonathon Fox contends that the EZLN is a true grassroots social movement that formed social capital without the traditional assistance of external allies. Fox states that the authoritarian policies of the PRI assured the success of the Zapatistas because they had already suppressed the moderate voices that were pushing for incremental change; thus, an armed, grassroots social movement seemed to be the only remaining option (1996, 1097). Far from being spontaneous, however, this movement had simply been organized at the local level without the input or knowledge of national reformist and opposition groups, relying instead on local communication and engagement.

Indeed, “[f]or more than a year, many dozens, probably hundreds of villages debated whether to take up arms in open assemblies (though they debated in their own languages, and were therefore unintelligible to most government officials)” (*ibid*). Fox argues that the Zapatistas built upon already existing tribal and religious connections to form their own “dense web of horizontal associations” (*ibid*). Their success at forming these connections is easily observed by the fact that not only have they succeeded and survived as a movement, but not a single member of any community that debated joining the movement ever informed to the government. Even before the movement officially emerged, they had succeeded in creating social capital among the citizenry of Chiapas.

While Fox is interested primarily in the internal connections that allowed the EZLN to gain and retain widespread support through the formation of social capital, Olesen focuses on how the movement created and leveraged similar connections on an international scale. Although the Zapatistas are opposed to neo-liberal economic policies that have followed globalization, the movement has proved itself adroit at using the “the Internet, or computer mediated communication, in the formation of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network” (2005, 181

While the EZLN has released hundreds of communiqués in the last 22 years, this thesis will focus on ones relating to civil society, democratization, and foreign assistance. *Enlace Zapatista* posts these communiqués in their

original Spanish and with translations whenever they are released to the public; however, the archived posts from the early days of the movement are only in Spanish. Thus, this thesis will also rely on archives of translations collected by a member of the solidarity network (located at <http://www.struggle.ws/mexico/ezlnco.html>); further, quality translations must be utilized, as my own Spanish is now relatively basic and nowhere near fluent.

“The First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle” served as a “declaration of war” and was released on January 1st, 1994 when the movement first struck at the government. Another communiqué, entitled “[t]he only choice is democracy or authoritarianism” was released a year and a half later, in July of 1995, and it restated the movement’s arguments for rejecting the rule of the PRI and local strongmen and embracing democratic self-governance. Finally, “Chiapas: The Thirteenth Stele” was released in July of 2003, and it was part of a series of changes and reforms instituted by EZLN leadership. This communiqué explained how and why the EZLN would restrict foreign charity coming into Chiapas, arguably limiting civil society in order to preserve the movement.

0.4 Kurdish Regional Government Case Study Literature Review

While the Zapatista movement has never pushed for secession or statehood, choosing instead to focus on achieving democratic reforms and autonomy, the Kurds in Iraq have long desired a nation of their own. For

decades, this ethnic group and its political leaders have slowly maneuvered the region from *de facto* autonomy based on demographics to *de jure* autonomy guaranteed under the Iraqi constitution. Now, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is poised to hold a referendum to declare independence. This move is the culmination of decades of networking, politicking, and pragmatic alliances, and it is likely that there will soon be an independent Kurdistan in what is now the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. This case study will examine how a small, marginalized movement that was ejected from Iran after a flirtation with an autonomous republic grew into a political government with international respect and support.

In their work *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq*, B. O'Leary, McGarry, and Salih provide a historical analysis of the various iterations of Kurdistan that have come and gone since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Kurds in northern Iraq have at some point been betrayed by virtually every major nation, from Iran to the United States, they currently enjoy a period of heretofore-unknown political power and support, both domestically and internationally (2005, 7). Despite, or perhaps because of, the ascendancy and threat of insurgent, Islamist terror groups, the KRG has consolidated and built upon previous international support to argue that they should be allowed to secede from Iraq in a bid for independence.

Hassanpour, meanwhile, offers a historical analysis of Kurds in each of their major enclaves and explains why a Greater Kurdistan that extends

throughout the north-central portion of the Middle East would be untenable. He argues that despite ethnic homogeneity, the political and social differences between various Kurdish factions are too great to overcome (1994). These differences, combined with a lack of will on the part of Turkey, Syria, and Iran to cede large portions of their land and citizenry, makes the goal of a Greater Kurdistan even more untenable.

This, however, does not preclude the formation of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan. While the two dominant parties in Kurdish politics, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have gone so far as to fight a civil war against each other, they are now unified in a small-scale revival of the Kurdish nationalist movement. Although there is often a risk that their alliance could fall apart, they both enjoy unprecedented positions of power in the region.

With one of the founders of the PUK, Fuad Masum, holding the Iraqi presidency and Masoud Barzani of the KDP serving as president of the KRG, a careful political approach could result in a peaceful transition to independence. As each group has sought rapprochement with longtime regional adversary Turkey, it seems more likely that the important regional governments will agree to an independent Iraqi Kurdistan (Park, 2014).

There is speculation, however, that these bids for independence are not genuine; rather, it is possible that they are merely an attempt to gain increased power and position before pushing for greater autonomy. C.

O'Leary contends that the KRG is better served consolidating their recent successes and gains while remaining a part of Iraq, perhaps as a federal district with great autonomy and, essentially, self-rule. She argues, "federalism can help to ensure the unity and stability of a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, thereby providing a climate for democratization and civil society building" (2002, 24). While these observations were likely true in 2002, the political situation of the KRG has improved to such a degree that the autonomy currently enjoyed by Iraqi Kurds might well seem insufficient.

1.0 The Zapatista Case: Background

On January 1, 1994, the Mexican government celebrated the successful passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). To the Mexican political elites, this represented their entrance into the world's economic elite. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which had ruled continuously for nearly 70 years, touted this new trade agreement as one of their great successes; however, the passage of NAFTA provided a springboard for discontent to emerge, and the guerillas of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) seized this opportunity.

On the same day that NAFTA went into effect, thousands of poorly armed peasant fighters emerged from the Lacandon Jungle in the southernmost Mexican state, Chiapas. With a clear message, articulated by the Zapatista's *mestizo* spokesman Subcomandante Marcos, it was impossible to ignore the sudden challenge to central authority as the rebels seized territory and clashed with the Mexican security apparatus. From the start, this was an indigenous peasant revolt, and "the uprising forcefully exposed the conditions of poverty and marginalization under which much of Mexico's indigenous population lived, the humiliation and discrimination they suffered, and the political exclusion which kept them from enjoying full citizenship" (van der Haar, 2004, 99).

Unprepared for the coordinated, though poorly supplied onslaught, the Mexican government responded with a show of force that was soon covered by

Western media, leading to international outrage. Internally, the Zapatista movement also began to gain support from segments of the Mexican population, including both intellectuals sympathetic to the plight of the indigenous and poor farmers from around the country. These outside allies of the movement demonstrated their support when “more than 100,000 people gathered in Mexico City protesting against the attempted annihilation of the rebels” (Mentinis, 2006, 9).

1.1 Motivations and Strategies

The Zapatista movement started with economic and political motivations. NAFTA, the EZLN and their allies argued, would make already poverty stricken regions even poorer. Cheap agricultural products, like corn, could now be imported from the United States without the protective tariffs to protect the *campesinos*, or peasant farmers, from losing their only source of income. In addition to the dramatic reductions to protective tariffs that NAFTA demanded, President Salinas instituted land reforms in 1992 that “proposed fundamental changes to the *ejidal* sector in matters of land redistribution, land tenure, economic relations, state relations, subsidy reduction, and programs targeted to support small farmers” (Stanford, 1994, 102). These changes to land rights amounted to massive privatization of previously public land that peasant farmers had long relied on for an income. Thus, the movement demanded that the Mexican government redistribute land to the peasantry, a demand supported by Article 27 of the Mexican

constitution, which guaranteed agrarian reforms and a redistribution of land back to the indigenous population (Teresa, 2004, 31).

In addition to arguing that NAFTA would decimate the livelihood of numerous indigenous and poor rural Mexicans, the Zapatista movement was also predicated on the belief that the PRI and even rival opposition parties had excluded indigenous populations from the political process. The wealthy landowners and businessmen in Mexico City would benefit from NAFTA and thus support its passage, but the rural poor and indigenous populations were excluded from the decision making process (Mentinis). As the indigenous populations had long been disenfranchised and neglected, both economically and politically, the Zapatista argument was accepted by many, allowing them to create an armed wing of several thousand insurgents that emerged as soon as NAFTA came into effect.

Quick to capitalize off the media attention and begin airing grievances, the EZLN leadership agreed to a ceasefire thirteen days after the start of hostilities. The influential bishop of the San Cristobal de las Casas diocese, Samuel Ruiz, organized this temporary abatement of hostilities, as he was a pacifist with sympathy for the Zapatista movement's goals (Preston, 2011).

Although the EZLN had initially hoped to export their revolution beyond the state of Chiapas, this was untenable, and the leadership quickly decided to focus their efforts on Chiapas itself. The Mexican government knew nothing of the rebellion, which had been in the works for years, and

they assumed that this was a movement arranged by outside agitation. The government's evidence for the Zapatistas being an external group was based on the identity of the EZLN spokesman Marcos, who was a *mestizo* rather than a member of an indigenous group. They did not imagine that the movement's utilization of Marcos as a mouthpiece was a deliberate move to attract more external attention, and the government instead speculated that the Zapatistas were really Guatemalan fighters (Doyle, 2004).

1.2 Origins of Support and the Creation of Networks

As the Mexican government did not properly understand the makeup and identity of the forces arrayed against them, they were unable to adequately respond. After the ceasefire was declared, Mexican authorities believed they could bribe local indigenous groups and villages away from the movement. They assumed that the peasant support for the Zapatistas was tepid and a matter of convenience and good propaganda. These assumptions, however, were generally incorrect. The EZLN was forged through consensus and negotiation between villages, local leaders, and the Zapatista leadership. While the Mexican government still employed a corrupt and paternalistic hierarchy in states with large indigenous populations, civilians in Chiapas organized themselves into town councils where everyone had a right to speak and decisions were made through negotiation and consensus (Barmeyer).

The EZLN utilized these councils to forge agreements of both direct support and passive alignment to create a broad network of internal

supporters. For years the councils met and debated, allowing individuals to offer their input. This was an exercise in true democracy, and it inspired the EZLN to adopt the spread of this form of governance into their mission. Further, the EZLN utilized networks created by Liberation Theology clergy to gain additional support for the movement and spread their ideology beyond remote, jungle villages. The Zapatistas did not win the support of every village that they approached within Chiapas; however, they were able to form a large coalition of internal support and met little active resistance, even among those they failed to convince (Olesen).

This success in forging a coalition of diverse interests is especially of note given the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in Chiapas. A significant number of *mestizo* and Spanish ranchers had settled in Chiapas during the nineteenth century and established large estates for agricultural and livestock. This resulted in many *mestizos* in Chiapas being relatively wealthy compared to the many indigenous groups that already occupied the region. A part of the former Mayan Empire, Chiapas retains some of the highest levels of indigenous population in all of Mexico, with the vast majority of districts composed of at least half indigenous and many reaching ninety percent indigenous. Within Chiapas, six major ethnic groups constitute the majority of indigenous citizens: the Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolabal, Zoque, Chol, and Maam (Mentinis). All of these groups have significant representation within the Zapatista movement and are distributed

throughout Chiapas, with large concentrations in the central highlands, throughout the northwest of the state, and along the Guatemalan border (Scmal, 2004). These are all areas where the Zapatista movement enjoys strong levels of local support.

While *mestizaje* (miscegenation) resulted in the mixing of indigenous and Spanish throughout Mexico, Chiapas was remote and undeveloped enough that large segments of the population remain “pure indigenous” despite official government efforts (*ibid*). While many in Chiapas have converted to the Catholic faith, the various indigenous groups have also been able to retain many of their own distinct customs and traditions. It also means that *mestizos* are less common in Chiapas than many other states in Mexico (*ibid*). While the wealthy *mestizo* ranchers and landholders who were able to retain land despite expropriation are opposed to the Zapatista movement, many live in the cities and lands outside EZLN control or influence; meanwhile, the *mestizos* living within Zapatista territories have a shared struggle with the movement as they are also often poor agricultural workers (Mentinis).

With this support, the EZLN was able to survive the government’s brutal counterattack, lasting long enough to agree to a ceasefire. Immediately, the Zapatistas stated that they were willing to find a political compromise rather than engage in an insurgency. As the Catholic Church had brokered the ceasefire and the international community was focused on

the uprising, the Mexican government agreed to enter into peace talks with the goal of creating a political solution. The Zapatistas were clear that their priority was the institution of democratic reforms rather than an overthrow of the state.

1.3 Articulating Demands and Radical Democracy

The Zapatista's Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle declared that "[c]ivil society assumed the duty of preserving our country. It showed its disapproval of the massacre and it obliged us to dialogue with the government" (EZLN, 1994). In this same communiqué, the Zapatistas renew their adherence to the ceasefire and declare that the EZLN's goal is to allow the formation and reinforcement of civil society in order to expedite the transition to democracy. Further, the EZLN demands participatory democracy, which will allow indigenous and poor, rural Mexicans to have a voice in the political system. They declare that "[t]he problem of power is not a question of who rules, but of who exercises power. If it is exercised by a majority of the people, the political parties will be obligated to put their proposals forward to the people instead of merely relating to each other" (*ibid*).

Of note, however, is the Zapatista commitment to radical democracy rather than liberal democracy. The EZLN espouse the philosophy that representatives should 'rule by obeying,' in that constituents will detail their wishes and desires through public forums, and representatives will be totally

responsive to these demands. The Zapatistas treat each member of the community as a rational actor with total equality, whether they are indigenous or *mestizo*, rich or poor, farmer or scholar (Olesen). Decisions are made by consensus both within the EZLN leadership and the areas they control, an approach that indicates the movement's adherence to radical democracy rather than classic democracy (*ibid*).

The EZLN broadcasted these messages throughout Mexico and the world by utilizing the newly popular Internet to organize networks of support beyond their territory in Chiapas. Communiqués were now distributed internationally instantaneously the day they were released, and activists around the world translated and shared these messages. The distribution of these materials was planned and premeditated; however, the Zapatistas relied on friends and colleagues to get the word out. After all, the EZLN was largely confined to the Lacandon Jungle by the Mexican military after 1995 when they broke the conditions of the ceasefire and forced the movement to abandon numerous villages that they had controlled since the start of the movement (Cleaver, 1998).

After surviving the months long siege, the EZLN and the Mexican government's Commission of Concordia and Pacification (COCOPA) began a round of talks aimed at finding a political solution. These accords were forged in the town of San Andres de la Larrainzar, and they were thus called the San Andres Accords. Signed on February 16, 1996, the accords

“establish[ed] recognition of a number of indigenous rights in the fields of, among others, forms of social and political organization, the election of local authorities, the administration of justice, management of resources, land tenure and cultural development, and they commit the Mexican government to promoting these rights” (van der Haar, 100).

These agreements attracted wide support from moderates as well as indigenous groups, and it appeared as though they would solve the crises. The accords promised autonomy for indigenous groups, and they memorialized a commitment to self-rule and democracy as a political compromise. The document was translated into multiple native languages and distributed widely; however, the EZLN soon realized that the PRI was not interested in investing local communities with political power. As the EZLN withdrew from the process, COCOPA offered a proposal to enshrine many of the agreements into the constitution. The EZLN agreed to this, but President Zedillo delayed passage for years while simultaneously sending additional military resources to Chiapas in the hope that he could crush the uprising completely without political compromise (*ibid*).

Throughout this process, the Zapatista networks of support remained largely intact. International supporters continued to post communiqués online and protest Mexican oppression in front of embassies and consulates, often attracting Western media attention (Olesen). Locally, relatively few villages defected from the cause. They were often unable to provide the

EZLN with material or political support, but they did not turn on the movement or reveal the identities of its leadership. The social capital that the Zapatistas had built up during the planning of the revolt remained relatively constant, demonstrating that the promise of civil society was more than a theoretical commitment.

1.4 Implementing Democratic Self-Governance In The Face of Oppression

These ties were further strengthened as the Zapatista leadership implemented their vision of democratic self-governance. Building off the existing models of participatory democracy, “formed among the Zapatista civilian population to organize their mobilization and resistance, and [...] this civil infrastructure was gradually formalized and consolidated as the conflict in Chiapas drew on” (van der Haar, 102). These EZLN organized autonomous municipalities within Chiapas were known locally as *Municipios Autonomos y Rebeldes Zapatistas* (MAREZ), and they were planned and implemented outside of the public eye (*ibid*).

Although the formation and implementation of these autonomous municipalities was discussed from the beginning of the movement, they only became a focus of the Zapatista movement following the San Andres accords. Moving quickly, the EZLN organized 38 of these MAREZ within two years, though they were prevalent only in central and eastern Chiapas, where the Zapatistas enjoyed considerable support (*ibid*). Although autonomy had been

discussed by EZLN leadership before their public emergence in 1994, “[t]he Accords not only established the legitimacy of the indigenous claim to autonomy, but also provided the Zapatistas with a powerful justification to proceed with such implementation themselves” (103).

As the EZLN worked to consolidate gain, however, they continually were met with significant violence. Indeed, a PRI affiliated band of paramilitaries committed one of the worst atrocities of the conflict when they attacked the village Acteal on December 22, 1997. This community was composed of Tzotzil who supported the goals of the Zapatistas. The Tzotzil, however, were pacifists and refused to engage in an armed struggle; thus, the village’s men withdrew when they heard news of an impending attack in order to minimize the chances of a violent clash. Instead of avoiding a fight, however, they experienced a brutal massacre that left 45 civilians, mostly women and children, dead (Mentinis, 20).

Although these attacks continued, neither the military nor police intervened. Refusing to do more than condemn the attacks, the government furthered their attempts to discredit the movement and remove human rights observers simultaneously. Utilizing their connections in the media, the PRI characterized the EZLN as a foreigner controlled group that had tricked a small number of indigenous Mexicans into joining their insurrection. Further, the Mexican government deported over a hundred citizen human rights observers from Europe and the United States and often banned them

from entering Mexico for up to a decade; further, the PRI added additional restrictions to who could receive humanitarian visas (22).

The Mexican government believed that this would give them a freer hand to suppress the Zapatista movement, and the PRI ramped up their campaign of attrition by cutting crucial social services to areas that the EZLN controlled or had public sympathy. This effort, however, arguably strengthened the Zapatista movement and their push for autonomy. Ignoring the government's obstructionist tone and unwillingness to compromise, EZLN redoubled their push for autonomous municipalities by forming functioning local governments that replaced the numerous social services that the PRI had eliminated (van der Haar, 103).

Rather than form these political systems themselves, the EZLN supported local elections that allowed any citizen within a district to serve on a municipal, autonomous council (*ibid*). This allowed both indigenous and *mestizo* representation, depending on local demographics and candidate qualifications; further, these diverse councils contradicted common criticisms of the movement that either argued it was controlled by outside agitators and not the indigenous, and that the movement was strictly indigenous and excluded the *mestizo* farmers. And while federal authority still exist within Chiapas, "[t]he autonomous municipalities operate parallel to the existing municipalities" (*ibid*).

The movement, however, has never been able to provide all of these services themselves; the EZLN leadership was often confined to the rainforest while the autonomous municipalities worked to introduce vital social services. Instead, civil society, which the Zapatistas always supported, has provided many of the key resources that the citizens living in autonomous municipalities require (Barmeyer). Numerous NGOs have supported the movement, both financially and materially, throughout the past two decades. Some groups organize volunteer labor that helps in construction, education, or medical care while others send aid shipments through local agents.

As domestic and foreign NGOs donated to the movement, it caused unintended problems that the Zapatistas were forced to address nimbly and sometimes authoritatively. Due to the structure of the autonomous communities, each operated in consultation with EZLN leadership; however, they were not answerable to the movement. Numerous autonomous municipalities sought to fully utilize civil society to provide needed services, and they quickly made as many contacts in and charitable appeals to NGOs as they could. Due to ability and location, this created an imbalance in the distribution of resources throughout Chiapas, creating social friction between municipalities that had long enjoyed strong levels of bridging social capital (Barmeyer).

The EZLN observed this emerging inequality, but they did nothing for several years. The PRI had finally been defeated in the polls; however, Vicente Fox was not much of an improvement for the Zapatistas. The government's campaign of violence and suppression, however, abated to a degree due to disinterest on the part of Fox and constant pressure from international supporters of the EZLN. Fox was a free market politician who desired greater economic relations with the West, and it was clear that overt and harsh oppression of the EZLN would cost Mexico business with pro human rights nations (Olesen).

1.5 Reorganizing the Movement and New Approaches

This abatement in violence gave the EZLN leadership an opportunity to emerge from the Lacandon Jungle and engage more directly with the autonomous municipalities. The Zapatista movement “reappeared, and forcefully, in August 2003, when the [EZLN] leadership announced a number of changes in the organization of the autonomous governance structures and thereby re-opened the debate on indigenous autonomy 'without approval’” (van der Haar, 104).

Chief among these changes was a new policy that restricted the role of NGOs operating within Chiapas. Promulgated in a document entitled *The Thirteenth Stele, Part Two: A Death*, this communiqué was published as a response to an increasingly piecemeal, inconsistent, and divisive NGO landscape. In the document, three main objections to how civil society

operates within Chiapas are listed, namely the prevalence of the Cinderella Syndrome, NGOs and funders starting unnecessary projects that harm the community, and uneven levels of economic assistance (irlandesa, 2003).

When describing the issue of Cinderella Syndrome, The Thirteenth Stele includes an anecdote where the writer (likely Subcomandante Marcos) describes an aid organization sending “a pink stiletto heel, imported, size 6 ½ ...without its mate.” The author does not dismiss the intent of the organization that sent the aid, however, stating that “[t]hese [are] good people who, sincerely, send us a pink stiletto heel, size 6 ½, imported, without its mate...thinking that, poor as we are, we’ll accept anything, charity and alms. How can we tell all those good people that no, we no longer want to continue living Mexico’s shame” (*ibid*). Thus, there are both practical and political considerations for the EZLN accepting NGO support.

Further, part of the Mexican government’s less belligerent strategy for defeating the Zapatista insurgency was through regional improvement projects that focused on economic improvements. The EZLN dismisses these efforts declaring, “if the Zapatista communities wanted, they could have the best standard of living in Latin America. Imagine how much the government would be willing to invest in order to secure our surrender [...] while the country fell apart in their hands” (*idid*). This might be somewhat disingenuous, after all the Zapatista movement has consistently rejected the use of economic status as a way to measure the success of a community;

however, the Zapatista movement has always been economically and politically motivated. Nevertheless, the EZLN started to focus increasingly on bringing substantive improvements to educational opportunities, access to medical services, and agricultural improvements to combat malnutrition.

These were the chief issues that surrounded the initial petitions sent to the central government from the start of the Zapatista's resistance, and the EZLN has been serious about addressing them rather than simply using the problems as propaganda tools. This is especially true now that the movement has parallel structure of governance within the state. And while the EZLN does not trust the government or many foreign NGOs to operate within the region, there are a few organizations that the Zapatistas consider to be legitimate partners. One such partner is the United States-based NGO named *Schools for Chiapas*, which will serve as the case study for EZLN-civil society interactions in this thesis.

1.6 Examining an EZLN Partner From San Diego

Schools for Chiapas was officially founded in 1996 after the founder and president of the organization, Peter Brown, and some of his fellow advocates were invited by Subcomandante Marcos to observe initial meetings between the Zapatistas and Mexican civil society organizations. Brown is an American educator and activist, and he has been a longtime supporter of the Zapatista movement and its initiatives. Brown was one of the many civil society actors deported from Mexico and banned from returning by the PRI as

a result of his work. This forced him to return to his local San Diego to organize and support further efforts from abroad. It is likely that his ejection from the country only added to his reputation among the EZLN, as the group is suspicious of outsiders who have not demonstrated their commitment to the movement (Barmeyer). Brown's work was recognized when he was bestowed with the NEA's Applegate-Dorros Peace and International Understanding Award in 2013.

As Schools for Chiapas formalized its activities, the group moved closer and closer to the EZLN with its stated *raison d'être* "focused on financially supporting Zapatista educational projects and other initiatives" (Organizational History, 2014). This is an NGO with a single, narrow area of interest. It is classified as an international development organization; however, Schools for Chiapas is, in reality, a member of the larger solidarity network that supports the Zapatista movement materially and spiritually.

This reality demonstrates the ability of the EZLN and their local partners to create strong bridging social capital beyond the state of Chiapas and Mexico. Peter Brown is totally devoted to the Zapatista movement, spending most of his time fundraising for the movement and educating Western audiences on the EZLN's politics and projects. At the same time, Schools for Chiapas expands the reach of bridging social capital by organizing volunteer opportunities for partners and those sympathetic to the Zapatista movement. These volunteers help to build new school buildings, teach

courses in subjects like English language, and experience the reality of those living in Zapatista areas of Chiapas. Additionally, volunteers receive an extensive orientation on the Zapatista movement's history and objectives so that they understand the movement and its ideology (Educational Travel Programs, 2014).

Zapatista educational programs are markedly different from those found in other parts of Mexico. As the indigenous communities in Chiapas have retained a greater sense of identity than other indigenous enclaves, traditional forms of education appear alongside modern subjects. In addition to learning local indigenous language, history, and culture, students also learn modern languages and natural sciences. Students also gain practical knowledge in traditional medicine, business, and agriculture as they work and learn alongside "education promoters," who are volunteer teachers selected by their local communities (Mayan Schools of Dignity, 2014).

An issue, however, is that Brown runs this outpost of the Zapatista movement with little support. He has two other board members, Ernie McCray and Adriana Barraza, who occupy the positions of secretary and treasurer respectively. While Ernie and Adriana have demonstrated a commitment to the Zapatista movement by serving on this board, volunteering a few hours a week of their time to promoting Schools for Chiapas, and donating financially to their organization, it is Brown who travels frequently to Chiapas to put his NGO's work and fundraising into

practice. While it is possible that Schools for Chiapas will cease to exist in its current form should Brown decide to disengage from the movement, he has been committed to the cause for over twenty years, indicating it will continue at least until his death or incapacitation. While it is possible that the EZLN's regard for the organization would allow another leader to take Brown's place and seamlessly continue the work of Schools for Chiapas, there is no clear successor for Brown, which is cause for concern. Unless he is able to constitute a larger board from among the many volunteers that have worked alongside the EZLN, Brown risks the organization's dissolution without a clear succession plan.

The mission statement of Schools for Chiapas offers a clear and precise description vis-à-vis the organization's activities, in that it "supports the autonomous, indigenous communities of Chiapas, Mexico in their efforts to create a just, democratic, and dignified education including autonomous schools, community health centers, ecological agricultural studies, and alternative market development." This gives both a general description of what Schools for Chiapas supports and then explains some of the ways in which the organization goes about implementing these goals.

Further, the vision of Schools for Chiapas is clearly stated in the mission statement in that the organization "join[s] people of conscience everywhere in promoting alternative models of education and action that challenge and resist environmental degradation and human exploitation"

(GuideStar Report, 2015). Schools for Chiapas embraces not just the work that the Zapatista movement does in the local community; it also codifies its commitment to the movement's political and economic goals within documents filed each year with the IRS in its Form 990.

It is likely that Brown worked with EZLN leadership to establish the goals and mission of Schools for Chiapas as his work was not interrupted by the promulgation of The Thirteenth Stele, which resulted in numerous NGOs withdrawing from Zapatista controlled areas. Rather, he was forced to focus his attentions internationally due to the previously mentioned two year ban from entering Mexico after he organized the construction of a school for rural citizens in the village of Oventic. This ban was only overturned when the PRI was ousted in the 2000 elections that brought Fox to power (Smith, 2000).

This close connection and long-lasting relationship with the EZLN demonstrates not just the power that social capital bonds can have in maintaining meaningful connections, but it also indicates the criteria that the Zapatista movement has for civil society organizations that wish to operate within their autonomous municipalities. In keeping with the parallel structure of autonomous municipalities and federally supported municipalities (the local bureaucracies that have official support from the Mexican federal government) that, the Zapatista movement does use an

incentive based structure to reward villages and municipalities that remain committed to the movement (Barmeyer).

The parallel structure of governance created by the Zapatistas must be accepted by any NGO operating within the autonomous communities as the EZLN maintains control over incoming development aid, directing it where they deem it necessary and taking a small percentage to maintain the movement (*ibid*). The Zapatistas, however, have made efforts to continue building bridging social capital between groups in Chiapas, whether they are supporters of the movement or not. Indeed, “an invitation was extended to the non-Zapatista indigenous population to make use of the services offered by the autonomous municipalities, such as education and conflict resolution” (van der Haar, 106). Further, Schools for Chiapas provides educational services for all those living within Chiapas and the autonomous municipalities, regardless of ethnicity and EZLN affiliation.

There are major structural issues with Schools for Chiapas, however. No matter how dedicated Peter Brown and his small board are, they are only three people. Furthermore, the organization operates with little transparency. While the board must approve the projects Schools for Chiapas finances, the Zapatista leadership likely selects these projects and priorities. While this is not an issue, *per se*, it arguably reveals that Schools for Chiapas is simply the American fundraising and friend-raising arm of the Zapatista movement. Nevertheless, Brown has significant ties to the EZLN, and his

work has resulted in numerous volunteers from across the United States traveling to Chiapas and living through shared experiences with locals, creating stronger bonds than a membership based organization would be able to forge. Yet, if anything altered the status quo in Chiapas, the organization could be affected.

When Schools for Chiapas is viewed through the lens of social solidarity, however, the organization takes on a different dimension. It is a supporting organization as opposed to a true NGO, allowing it to occupy a position of advocacy, programming, and fundraising on behalf of the Zapatista movement. This is only possible because of the bonds of social capital that exist between Peter Brown and his organization and the EZLN. With an organization that is cautious when it comes to outside involvement, Schools for Chiapas has created and maintained a position of trust through its work and contributions to the Zapatista movement, as demonstrated by their continued involvement in the region when other organizations have been expelled and the proximity of volunteers to Zapatista villages that is typically reserved for trusted supporters (Barmeyer).

1.7 Applying Literature to the Zapatista Movement

Using the literature previously reviewed, this thesis will now examine the Zapatista movement and Schools for Chiapas as parts of civil society and social capital generating institutions. With Diamond's basic definition of civil society, there is an open and voluntary component as neither the EZLN nor

Schools for Chiapas force or coerce membership or participation from locals. While the EZLN is certainly autonomous from the government, a key aim of the group, it has become a *de facto* government in parts of Chiapas.

This means that the collaborative efforts of Schools for Chiapas are only somewhat autonomous as they, and the NGO sector in general, must rely on the Zapatista movement for support and legitimacy (Barmeyer). NGOs and the EZLN leadership, however, accept a shared set of rules vis-à-vis provisions of service. Thus, the Zapatista movement, broadly, and Schools for Chiapas, specifically, fulfill the majority of Diamond's characteristics for civil society.

Habermas adds to this definition when he proclaims that civil society and social movements are meant to appear spontaneously, reflecting the desires of the citizenry while also spreading the movement or organization's message to a broader audience. The EZLN grew as a result of local dissatisfaction that had compounded for decades without proper government intervention. Schools for Chiapas, meanwhile, came from an expressed desire by both the citizenry and the Zapatista movement to improve educational opportunities.

Viewing the Zapatista movement and Schools for Chiapas through Peyton and Moody's conception of philanthropy, the actions of both organizations are voluntary and intended to promote a conception of the public good. The voluntary action is due to the fact that neither side is

coercive or coerced into participation. A caveat, however, must be considered in that Schools for Chiapas does not have the operating freedom to determine what programs institute or where they run them. Rather, the EZLN will theoretically determine the areas of most need and disperse aid there. In practice this does not always occur; however, this does challenge the EZLN's status as a philanthropic actor to a degree as the movement does partially restrict civil society.

Berry's discussion of citizen groups presents a curious contrast with the Zapatista movement. Examining the US and Western democratic traditions, Berry concludes that while a social movement may form, their efforts will be largely restricted to mobilization and lobbying as opposed to direct democracy through participatory institutions. This trend, while observable in the United States and likely in central Mexico, was opposite in Chiapas. The social movement that formed around the EZLN certainly mobilized and lobbied government, making trips to Mexico City to seek redress, but they also applied a local concept of governing by listening.

Utilizing local forms of participation that pre-dated the EZLN, the Zapatista movement promotes local participation from all citizens and informs policy decisions from local discussions and decisions. Meanwhile, international supporters of the EZLN will behave in a manner similar to what Berry predicts. Schools for Chiapas sometimes behaves like a US

citizen group by engaging in lobbying and grassroots activism at an international level.

Another key area to examine is the need for a social movement, like the Zapatista movement, to emerge from the local political system. As Diamond describes, the EZLN emerged to serve as a mechanism for the population to express their discontent with government. With Diamond's addendum that social movements are particularly helpful when elections do not accurately show citizen preferences and passions, the *raison d'être* of the EZLN becomes less opaque.

As seen, the Mexican national government spent few resources developing Chiapas and was unresponsive to the needs of the local *mestizo* and indigenous population. This created the necessary space and impetus for the EZLN to coalesce and gain support within the local population. By occupying this space, the Zapatista movement has been able to transform from a short-lived insurgency to a *de facto* autonomous state within a state. The EZLN continues to press the Mexican federal government for greater constitutional and political freedoms for indigenous and poor Mexicans, and the movement continues to function as a parallel government within areas of control.

By adjusting how they accept and distribute NGO funding, the Zapatista movement has also avoided a major pitfall that Diamond examines. By distributing funding and projects as needed and serving as a convener, the

EZLN ensures that the movement's goals are not subverted by outside interests and avoids any single part of the movement becoming too reliant on foreign funding. Further, the Zapatistas have cultivated and engaged with NGOs, like Schools for Chiapas, so that funding is known and projects are agreed upon. Not constantly focused on securing funds, the Zapatista movement can focus on maintaining membership and providing services to the citizens they work with.

Due in part to this control over international funding, the EZLN has not been forced to contend with international donors attempting to subvert or undermine the goals of the movement. The Jenkins and Halcli argument that social movement philanthropy will undercut the most radical forces for change is not evidenced in this case study. This argument might presuppose a completely free civil society, however, which neither the Zapatista movement nor the Mexican federal government permit. With the Zapatistas working as a convener and distributor of funding for aid projects, the movement has perhaps eliminated most opportunities for their mission and message to be subverted by outside interests. Instead, the Mexican government's paramilitary groups offer the main alternative to the Zapatista movement within Chiapas.

Fung's description of social movements fits the Zapatistas perhaps most closely. His conception of social movements is more expansive than many others, allowing them to not only serve as schools of democracy but also

as a form of resistance to the government. With local forms of participatory democracy as a template, the Zapatistas have introduced local autonomy throughout the areas they control, and Fung describes this trend almost exactly.

As Benford and Snow theorize, the EZLN has sought to frame their movement in the face of government repression and propaganda. Marcos and the leadership have actively attempted to dispel notions that the Zapatistas are external agents or part of the urban *intelligentsia*. As part of the diagnostic framing process, the EZLN argued that it was an inclusive movement composed of both indigenous Mexicans and poor *mestizo* farmers opposed to the political and economic repression committed by the federal government, which fits the injustice model that Benford and Snow offer.

In the case of the prognostic framing, the Zapatistas initially used violent rebellion to accomplish social change, but they quickly reframed the situation when a ceasefire was brokered and actively lobbied for a political resolution that would accomplish the movement's key demands of increased indigenous rights and a rejection of neoliberal economic policies. Finally, the EZLN utilized motivational framing for both internal and external audiences. Though the vocabulary used has remained decisive and called for action, it no longer calls for violent rebellion.

While the EZLN has transformed into a powerful and widely supported social movement, it is likely the Zapatistas would have been violently crushed

decades ago without the large amounts of bonding and bridging social capital created by the movement and its partners. The Mexican government had shown its willingness to engage the EZLN with overwhelming, disproportional force before the movement's supporters were able to organize demonstrations and the Western media started to cover the violent campaign as a result of protests opposed to the military response throughout Europe. This press coverage resulted in political pressure from Western trade partners who worried about human rights violations.

The EZLN started as a mix of local indigenous and *mestizo* members. Even among the indigenous membership, many early Zapatistas hailed from a diverse collection of indigenous sub-groups with enclaves throughout the state of Chiapas. This fulfills a key requirement of Smith's, where a social movement must be composed of various groups of stakeholders, internally, to succeed.

Although Robert Putnam excludes social movements from his calculus of the formation of social capital, most other scholars examined allow some space for these organizations. Foley and Edwards agree with Putnam that massive, diffuse membership organizations are not conducive to either bonding or bridging social capital; however, the Zapatista movement does not function like the national and international organizations Putnam examines.

Rather, Smith's analysis of social movements creating transnational social capital through the Internet is observed vis-à-vis the Zapatista

movement. Although the movement's initial leadership did not post manifestos online, they did use networks of trusted contacts and friends to distribute speeches and ideological writings to both Mexican and international audiences. Supporters cultivated these connections to create a web of members and supporters that repopulates membership and remains engaged in the movement, even after two decades of involvement in some cases (Olesen).

While the PRI has lost many of its authoritarian trappings following losses at the polls, the Mexican government retains an electoral authoritarianism as it continues to suppress democratic movements and practices (Hernandez, 2014). This remains especially true for many indigenous Mexicans. Mungiu-Pippidi argues that states transitioning from authoritarian rule to functioning democracy will start with grassroots organizations that strengthen bonds over time to become democratic institutions, and that is gradually happening with the Zapatista movement. While the EZLN does not have authority throughout the entire state of Chiapas, they have succeeded in supplanting government control throughout the central regions of the state. With local councils elected by all the citizenry and a system of democracy that recognizes every individual's right to give input, the grassroots Zapatista movement has been strengthened into a democratic institution within Chiapas (Mentinis).

Finally, the EZLN demonstrates the veracity of many of Minkoff's claims. The Zapatistas might have been primarily focused on the plight of indigenous Mexicans, but their rhetoric and actions have improved the lives of *mestizo* peasants living within Chiapas. Further, the Zapatista movement's success at surviving in Chiapas for two decades and creating a parallel government in the states is arguable dwarfed in importance by the focus and international attention they drew to the plight of the indigenous. The EZLN was able to shape the message and force a debate on the rights guaranteed to indigenous Mexicans. While many of their demands, including land reform, have been ignored, the Zapatistas caused many Mexican states to codify rights, protections, and privileges for the indigenous population.

1.8 Concluding Thoughts on the EZLN

The Zapatista movement has not managed to take Mexico City or create franchises throughout the nation, but that was never the movement's goal. Indigenous citizens, from Chiapas, have led the EZLN since its inception, and although the movement accepted support and aid from groups from all around Mexico and the world, their propaganda and public relations efforts have focused on gaining and retaining support. The movement calls on supporters to visit Chiapas and take lessons back to their own states or countries, but they have largely refrained from exporting their revolution.

Perhaps this is a political calculation in that the Mexican federal government now tolerates the Zapatistas. The movement could be loath to

escalate hostilities by moving beyond the isolated and sparsely populated state of Chiapas where they have cultivated a large amount of support and social capital. Whatever the case, the Zapatista movement appears as though it will remain a *de facto* autonomous state for the immediate future. Although they must contend with sporadic paramilitary attacks, the EZLN has been successful in implementing democratic forms of self-governance, as a parallel alternative to federal authority, throughout Chiapas. While not the type of social movement that Putnam would examine, the EZLN represents a different kind of grassroots movement that has promoted the formation of social capital and allowed civil society to, relatively, flourish.

2.0 Introduction to the Iraqi Kurdish Case

The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) has existed in Northern Iraq since 1992; however, it has roots in ancillary movements that started in the 1940s following World War II. This case study will examine the history of the KRG, discuss how it has at times resembled a social movement, and critique the KRG's policies and actions as it attempts to move forward from regional autonomy to full independence. This case study will also examine the coalition of interests that make up the KRG and its principle competitors and how these interests interact in the collective push for the creation of a sovereign, democratic Kurdistan.

First, however, it must be understood that this is primarily an ethnic, political, and military movement and rather than a traditional grassroots social movement. While the Zapatista movement utilized ties with external NGOs and ideological partners, the KRG and its various parties have instead focused on pragmatic ties to international governments throughout its history. This demonstrates the diverse ways politically marginalized ethnic groups can utilize distinct strategies to achieve democratic self-governance.

2.1 The Historical Roots of the Kurdish Question

The Kurds have occupied land in modern Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran for over a millennium; Kurdish origin stories identify their ancestors as the Medes who usurped the Assyrian Empire and the Kardouchoi who defeated the Persian Empire's elite 10,000, as recounted by Xenophon in the *Anabasis*

(Gunter, *Kurds Ascending* , 2008). Conquered by the Arabs during their Mesopotamia and Turkish campaigns, the name “Kurd” was first applied, and great heroes of Islam like Saladin emerged from this newly Islamized population (Gunter, *Kurds Ascending*).

With most Kurds living in the Ottoman Empire, early attempts to gain independence or autonomy for a Kurdish state were infrequent. This was especially true given the tribal nature of the Kurdish people and the geography of the region. With mountains separating Kurds in Turkey from those in Syria and Iraq and similar ranges separating Iraqi Kurds from their Iranian counterparts, both geographical and cultural barriers stunted ethnic movements. As many tribes had little interaction with one another, they developed unique cultures, religious practices, and even languages (Hassanpour).

Except for one ill-fated attempt to revolt against the Ottomans, there were no major ethnic Kurdish attempts to mobilize for sovereignty. Kurdish soldiers bolstered Ottoman units in World War I and subsequently supported Ataturk’s campaign for Turkey (Gunter, *Kurds Ascending*). At this point, however, the first meaningful discussions of a Kurdish state began as President Woodrow Wilson and his European allies divided the former Ottoman Empire. While many Kurdish leaders responded to this possibility with enthusiasm, the post-World War I treaty that defined the borders of Kurdistan was unappealing to many others (*ibid*).

2.2 The Origins of a Potential Modern Kurdish State

The Treaty of Sèvres certainly included a provision for the creation of a Kurdish state, but it also divided the Anatolian peninsula into a number of smaller states and ceded land to European nations like France and Greece. As Kurds had fought with distinction in the Ottoman military, some disagreed with these divisions and joined Ataturk in the Turkish national movement. Thus when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1926, Turkey's borders were secure but without any provision for a Kurdish state (O'Leary, *et. al.*).

Because not all Kurds were pleased with Ataturk's secular and Turkic-centric reforms, there were three major Kurdish revolts in a little more than a decade. This was arguably the start of the Kurdish ethnic movement. The reasons for revolt varied, however. The first movement was a result of religious conservative Kurds rejecting the secular nature of modern Turkey, but the next two revolts were transnational military campaigns that stretched from Lebanon to Iran. While these revolts were short-lived, they began a new, international movement based around the Kurdish ethnic identity without regard to national borders (Gunter, *Kurds Ascending*).

This trend continued into the post World War II period of decolonization. Seeking to expand their influence and counterbalance Western interests in the region, the Soviet Union supported a small Kurdish separatist movement in northwest Iran. Although their goals were initially

confined to autonomy and regional self-governance, the local elites expanded their ambitions and declared the creation of the Republic of Mahabad in January of 1946 (Gunter, *Kurds of Iraq*, 1992).

Led by Islamic jurist Qazi Muhammad, the republic weathered numerous attacks from Iranian forces, which saw the movement as an illegitimate rebellion. The Kurds resisted these attacks for less than a year before falling in December, due mostly to the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Iran as proscribed by the Yalta Agreement. Qazi was executed for treason, and many Kurdish nationalists fled to the Soviet Union (King, 2014).

2.3 The Beginning of a Kurdish Regional Government

One of these refugees was the Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani. Leader of the prominent Kurdish Barzani clan from Northern Iraq, Mustafa and many of his loyal tribesman and supporters had fled to Kurdish Iran in 1943 following an unsuccessful rebellion against the British mandate of Iraq and their government in Baghdad. Inspired initially as much by anti-imperialism and tribal politics as by ethnicity, Mustafa became increasingly supportive of the Kurdish nationalist cause during his time in the Republic of Mahabad (O'Leary, *et. al.*). After years of moving from one Soviet state to another, Barzani and his followers returned to Iraq when Abd al-Karim Qasim deposed the British backed monarchy.

Qasim and Barzani rapidly established a positive relationship. Elected to head the newly formed Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Mustafa was the most powerful Kurd in Iraq. He led the largest Kurdish political organization, and he was also the leader of one of the largest and most notable Kurdish clans in Iraq. This gave Barzani tremendous power in Northern Iraq, and Qasim sought to use this power as a counterbalance to internal forces that challenged his rule. Mustafa was an adept politician, and he sought to increase his clan's power and prestige through alliances and social capital creation (Rubin, 2007).

While the KDP rapidly built and consolidated power in Northern Iraq, Barzani recognized that the local communist party had a strong base of power in the region among both urban workers and the *intelligentsia*, and he feared they would be a challenge to his future leadership of a Kurdish state. Rather than react with hostilities, however, Mustafa instead elevated a communist official to Secretary General of the KDP, allying himself with the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). When the ICP began to lose favor in Baghdad, however, Barzani favored political expedience to the social bonds his alliance with the communists had yielded. Despite the fact that the KDP and ICP had fought together to put down an Arab insurrection in Mosul on behalf of Qasim, Barzani severed all ties with the communists when Baghdad began to marginalize the party (O'Leary, *et. al.*).

The sudden cessation of the alliance between the KDP and the ICP certainly kept Mustafa aligned with Qasim, but it caused prominent Kurds to begin privately doubting the integrity and priorities of Barzani and his followers. As Qasim began to distrust his ally, he moved against Barzani by promoting dissention among the Kurdish tribes and notables. This was meant to block the hegemony that Mustafa sought in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, and Qasim was successful at first. He soon, however, was engaged in open conflict with Mustafa, which led to a destructive military campaign against the KDP. Barzani again displayed his political acumen, engaging with the United States, Soviet Union, and Iran in a bid to counter the Iraqi military (Ghareeb, 1981).

2.4 A Military Campaign for Autonomy?

With little concern for Cold War alliances, Barzani adroitly utilized whatever connections he could to counter Qasim. The alliances Mustafa constructed were sometimes short-term partnerships, but his connections with the United States would come to define the Kurdish struggle for autonomy in future decades. Further, Barzani began to engage with the various pan-Arab politicians that he had once fought against in Mosul as a way to ensure future political connections and relevance once Qasim fell. This was only a matter of time, Barzani theorized, as he worked to erode Qasim's power by refusing peace overtures and lengthening the military conflict between the KDP and the Iraqi military (Gunter, *Kurds of Iraq*).

Mustafa publicly demanded full Kurdish autonomy, which did help to repair relations with Kurdish clans who thought he was not doing enough for the Kurdish cause. For the next few decades, this same scenario would repeat multiple times under successive Iraqi governments. Mustafa would attempt to engage with Baghdad, and relations would improve to the point of meaningful negotiations; however, the Iraqi government only gave token autonomy to the Kurds and the KDP.

In multiple cycles of violence, the KDP would reject peace deals or end agreements with the Iraqi government and resume hostilities in order to secure political autonomy. Barzani continued to engage whomever he could in order to advance his cause, ending his relationship with the Soviet Union after it began to embrace the Iraqi government. Thus, the KDP strengthened ties with the United States, began to receive aid from Israel, and continued relations with Iran. These engagements with the West, however, cost Barzani support within the KDP and the Kurdish population. This discontent, combined with personal and clan differences, resulted in the formation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in 1975 (Ghareeb).

2.5 The End of Single-Party Rule and Conflicting Kurdish Visions

Unlike the KDP, which was completely controlled by Mustafa Barzani, the PUK was a coalition of political interests with a diverse leadership core. The foundation and leadership of the PUK was composed of notable clan leaders and politicians and leaders included Jalal Talabani, Nawshirwan

Mustafa, and Fuad Masum. These men represented center-left, Marxist-Leninist, and social-democratic ideology, respectively, and they offered an alternative to the autocratic policies of Mustafa Barzani and the KDP. These men had known one another for decades, and they had strong bonds of social capital to go along with their impeccable records of fighting for an autonomous Kurdistan in Iraq as members of the KDP (Gunter, *KDP-PUK Conflict*, 1996).

While KDP possessed tremendous bonding social capital based on the power and size of the Barzani clan, they lacked any bridging social capital with many of the other Kurdish clans that they had attempted to suppress over the decades, with the communists Mustafa had betrayed early in his career, and with the intelligentsia who desired true democratic self-governance and autonomy as opposed to an autocratic political system dominated by the Barzani clan (Ghareeb). These groups helped to form a viable alternative to the KDP as they drew grassroots support with both local notables, particularly from the Sulaymaniyah area, and workers with socialist or communist leanings.

Another key difference between the KDP and the PUK was the PUK's willingness to engage Kurds in Syria, Turkey, and Iran while the KDP preferred to focus only on Iraqi Kurds (Ghareeb). This pragmatic action by Mustafa and his successor and son, Masoud, allowed the KDP to find support in regional and international governments while the PUK was supported by

Kurds in regional neighbors but not by the non-Kurds who controlled the governments and traditionally suppressed Kurdish ambitions within their own borders.

Like the KDP, the PUK dominated the associational life of its supporters. Party affiliation or clan membership was of enormous importance, and these political structures also defined associational life. At times, these two parties actively suppressed their rivals and limited civil liberties. The KDP, and Barzani especially, have been accused of limiting civil society through military attacks on the PUK and the suppression of other opposition political and media groups. Though these actions have declined, they were especially prevalent whenever Mustafa and Masoud attempted to secure their personal power and their clan's position within Iraqi Kurdistan and the region.

2.6 Rival Parties Coalesce for a New Push for Freedom

While the KDP and the PUK clashed from the time of the latter's formation in 1975, the two groups came together in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The two groups joined in 1983 to rebel against Saddam Hussein, but their campaign resulted in the deaths of over a hundred thousand Kurdish civilians and the imposition of numerous anti-Kurd laws to forestall future rebellions. During the course of the hostilities, the Hussein regime directed attacks against civilian populations, including the 1988 gassing of thousands of Kurds in the town of Halabja (Human Rights Watch, 1995). The attack

resulted in the deaths of thousands of Kurds and “[t]he atrocity at Halabja scarred the collective memory of Iraqi Kurds and hardened their determination to run their own affairs autonomously within a loose Iraqi federation” (BBC, 2013).

This massacre, and subsequent attacks on Kurdish populations from Baghdad following Saddam’s defeat in the Gulf War, resulted in the United States establishing a security and no-fly zone under the banner “Operation Provide Comfort” in 1991, a campaign that would end the refugee crisis sparked by Saddam’s massacre of civilians and offer “a promise of some degree of autonomy from Baghdad” (Haulman, 182). With US military and political support, the dream of an autonomous Kurdistan was suddenly a reality. While this autonomy was *de facto*, like the Zapatista’s autonomy, it was embraced by both the KDP and the PUK, who joined together to form the first Kurdish Regional Government (Gunter, *Kurds Ascending*).

2.7 The Kurdish Civil War, A Brief Argument Before Autonomy

Hoping to govern effectively, the KDP and PUK agreed to form a unity government after the 1992 elections; however, political differences and ambitions quickly ended this government and resulted in the Kurdish Civil War. While the PUK turned to Kurdish allies from Syria and Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), and Iranian allies, the KDP allied with Saddam Hussein and asked for assistance against the PUK (*ibid*). Like his father, Masoud engaged with anyone who would further his goals.

This civil war again demonstrates the deep divisions between Kurds that existed both within Iraq and within the international Kurdish population. Fighting continued between the two groups and their allies until 1998 when the United States was able to broker a peace agreement between the PUK and the KDP (Haulman). The treaty remained intact, and the two groups joined together again during the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. Supported by US air superiority, the two Kurdish groups struck against Hussein's military installations in northern Iraq, defeating opposition in Mosul and Kirkuk. Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani and their parties cooperated at a level not seen since their earlier ill-fated 1983 campaign against Saddam Hussein. This time, however, they had the backing of the United States and a clear path to *de jure* autonomy as opposed to the *de facto* autonomy enjoyed since the US no-fly zone and the cessation of the Kurdish Civil War (Gunter, *Kurds Ascending*).

This cooperation led to a political rapprochement between the two quarreling parties. Since the Kurdish Civil War and the subsequent US brokered peace accord, the KDP held sway in central and northwest Iraqi Kurdistan while the PUK controlled the land around their traditional stronghold of Sulaymaniyah in the southeast of the region; however, the two organizations realized that the future of an independent Kurdistan relied on their political cooperation as well as their military cooperation.

2.8 A Kurdish Federal State Under the Iraqi Constitution

With the connections that Barzani and Talabani had cultivated in the West, Russia, Turkey, and Israel, the US-led coalition and many regional neighbors backed *de jure* autonomy for the Kurds. Article 117(1) of the Western backed Iraqi Constitution, approved in 2005, declared “[t]his Constitution, upon coming into force, shall recognize the region of Kurdistan, along with its existing authorities, as a federal region” (Al-Ali, 2005, 37). Kurdish authority over the autonomous region was further reinforced in Article 141, which states that “[l]egislation enacted in the region of Kurdistan since 1992 shall remain in force, and decisions issued by the government of the region of Kurdistan, [...] provided that they do not contradict with the Constitution” (44).

With constitutional recognition, the Kurdish dream seemed complete. In a landmark agreement, Talabani agreed to serve as President of Iraq while Barzani would lead a unified KRG as president. This agreement ended the partitions of control that had previously existed between the two Persian Gulf wars. While the PUK and KDP certainly still exist, they have governed the KRG in a tenuous coalition.

Since the conclusion of his own presidency, Talabani’s close friend and political ally Fuad Masum has occupied the largely ceremonial position. Barzani, meanwhile, received an extension on his presidency from the KRG parliament. This has been a contentious issue, as many Iraqi Kurds want to

move on from the KDP/PUK political duality and the tight control of the Barzani family. One main complaint about Masoud Barzani is his perceived lack of commitment to true Kurdish independence. This complaint, and others, contributed to the formation of a nationalist opposition slate of candidates, organized under the banner of the Change List by former PUK leader and co-founder, Nawshirwan Mustafa (Albayrak, 2014).

2.9 Autonomy Is Not Enough: Renewed Calls for Independence

While the KRG has considerable political autonomy, many still hope for a push for true independence. In the face of the Iraqi federal government's failure to provide security for the nation in the face of sectarian violence, most notably the so-called Islamic State's (known as Daesh locally) capture of swathes of Iraqi territory and frequent attacks on Kurds, many in the KRG see this as an ideal opportunity to break away from Baghdad.

While this potential secession does not have support from the Abadi government (Chambers and Coles, 2016), there is little the Iraqi government could do to stop Kurdish independence given the wide support that the KRG has cultivated in the fight against Daesh and other extremist organizations.

The Iraqi Kurds have maintained their extensive relationships both in the region and internationally. The KRG now receives weapons and supplies directly from European nations like Germany, circumventing the central government. They are also seen as the most competent and fierce fighters against terrorist elements, defeating numerous offensives launched by Daesh

and remnants of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist military, most notably the Naqshbandi Army, an insurgent group formed by Saddam's close advisor and deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri (BBC, 2014).

Further, the KRG used the instability to retake the traditionally Kurdish city of Kirkuk. This city and the surrounding lands were lost during Saddam Hussein's Arabization program, and the KRG has repeatedly attempted to regain the land. With the deterioration of security, the Kurds have been able to take the land and position themselves as protectors of the local Kurds, Turkmens, and Arabs in a move that has drawn protests from Baghdad (van Wildenburg, 2015).

With Kirkuk's rich oil reserves, an independent Kurdistan could survive economically through trade with Turkey. The Turkish government already has good economic and political ties with the KDP, and the KRG in general; however, there is a chance that Turkey will vehemently oppose any independence movement, fearing it will embolden truculent Kurds within their own nation (Park). As the KRG prepares its peshmerga forces to recapture Mosul, in concert with Shiite militias and the Iraqi Army, a bid for independence might be put off until the Kurdish borders are secured against Daesh. Barzani, however, has acceded to internal pressure and promised a referendum on the issue of independence in 2016 (Rudaw, 2016).

The pathway to democratic self-governance for Iraq's Kurds has been long and often contradictory, with the Barzanis focusing on maintaining their

own power while only indirectly pressing for self-governance or independence unless pressed by the majority of Iraqi Kurds into greater action. The Talibani coalition that makes up the PUK, meanwhile, served as an alternative to the KDP until they entered into their fractious coalition. While Talabani and other Kurdish politicians have not publicly embraced the current conception of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan, there is a large amount of latent support from the populace that might force the majority of the KRG into supporting this transition.

2.10 Applying the Literature to the Iraqi Kurdish Case

All three of the major Kurdish political institutions, the KRG, the PUK, and the Change List, emerged as reactions to distinct societal issues that affected individuals in the regions the organizations emerged from. The KRG initially emerged in response to the political and social disenfranchisement of Kurds in Northern Iraq while the PUK was founded in response and protest to the mono-party control of the Barzani clan. Finally, the Change List was founded and received enormous support from the grassroots in response to the rampant corruption that has plagued the KRG and the PUK. With this in mind, the Kurdish political parties fit Habermas' litmus test for inclusion into civil society.

Supporters of the KRG, the PUK, and most recently the Change List all promote democratic practices as these are part of each organization's public platform. By publicly supporting them and voting for them in the various

regional and national elections, these organizations help to promote a Tocquevillian conception of philanthropy as they promote democratic norms and practices in the private life. Every individual in Iraqi Kurdistan has equal standing, regardless of ethnicity, political affiliation, or religion.

The various social-political organizations that make up Iraqi Kurdish associational life engage in collective action through protest, rebellion, and political action, but they have also served at times as national citizen groups. When these groups have been out of power or working to advance the Kurdish cause in Baghdad or internationally, the KRG and PUK have both engaged governments and civil society actors on behalf of their supporters and members. This matches Berry's definition of citizen groups as they will lobby and educate on behalf of the Kurdish people that they purport to represent.

The emergence of the KRG, PUK, and Change List in response to a lack of responsive politics or public corruption is in keeping with Diamond's theory that social movements serve as a democratic check for the population. The massive amount of support that transferred to the PUK when it split from an unresponsive KRG and the emergence of the Change List in response to perceived institutional corruption both reinforce this theory in the Iraqi Kurdish case. Creating new movements allows for the citizenry to register their discontent and pressure the government for reforms. The willingness of Kurds to defect from the organizations they had previously supported and

move to new groups also supports Mangiu-Pippidi's argument that collective action can serve as a counterbalance to autocratic governments as it weakens the power of the KRG or PUK and demonstrates a rejection of corruption, cronyism, or unpopular political stances.

Recent shifts and realignments in Iraqi Kurdish politics and policies also support the argument, put forward by Jenkins and Halcli, that international funders can impact the priorities of social movements. While the Iraqi Kurdish organizations all had some level of cooperation with Syrian Kurds, these relationships have been strained in response to Turkish pressures.

As the Turkish government seeks to marginalize the Syrian Kurds, long linked with Kurdish separatists in the south of Turkey, a once friendly relationship between Iraqi and Syrian Kurds has become increasingly fractious. Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish trade is too important to sacrifice, even if that results in decreased military cooperation and a public pivot away from a greater Kurdistan that transcends national boundaries. Further, Turkish and American patronage is directed mainly towards the KRG as they are perceived as the least radical of the Kurdish organizations vis-à-vis ideology.

As Fung contends, Kurds in Northern Iraq have substituted their own democratic practices and organizations rather than adapting to Iraqi national politics. As a frequently oppressed ethnic minority group, Iraqi Kurds used the creation of distinct Kurdish organizations to resist the oppressive policies

of the central government. At times, Iraqi Kurdish organizations, especially the KRG, have neglected to develop civic virtues as they have sought to resist the various central government that have violently repressed the Iraqi Kurds.

Throughout the history of the KRG and PUK, the Kurdish organizations have framed their struggle as a search for political and social freedoms in the face of various oppressive regimes. While this is a case of injustice framing, the prognostic framing of the struggle has changed over time. Initially, the KRG was publicly fighting for political autonomy from the central government; however, the PUK and Change List have both pressured the KRG into publicly accepting a transition to true independence as a solution for the marginalization that many Iraqi Kurds feel. This prognostication further influences the motivational framing of the Kurdish organizations as the vocabulary has shifted from a push for total autonomy to a demand for true independence.

In the Iraqi Kurdish case, the argument for social capital is muddled. There is a large amount of hegemony within each organization, but supporters of the KRG, PUK, and Change List have little regard for one another. Kurdish politics remain fractious, and there appears to be relatively little bridging social capital between each organization. At the same time, members of the KRG, PUK, and Change List all have substantial connections

and trust with other members of the same group. This indicates a large amount of bonding social capital within each individual group.

In the case of the KRG and to a lesser extent the PUK, there also exists substantial bridging social capital with regional and world governments and organizations. The KRG is closely allied with the Turks, Americans, and various European powers. The PUK, meanwhile, has maintained relatively close ties to Iran and some connections with the Syrian Kurds. The close business ties between the KRG and Turkey bely Fukuyama's argument that social capital can be an important factor in inter-state economics. While Turkey has fractious relations with its own Kurdish population and many other groups of Kurds in surrounding nations, the KRG has maintained a positive relationship with Turkey that has translated to increased trade even as the Turks repress Kurds domestically.

The KRG continues to have political power based on traditional support, patronage, and tribal affiliation; however, the PUK and Change List are both assemblages of diverse coalitions that have coalesced around two main organizations. As Minkoff contends, this is important because it allows for an otherwise diffuse opposition to unite in an effort to register their opinions, build social capital, and amplify capacity.

2.11 Not a Social Movement *Per Se*, but An Interesting Case Study

As previously discussed, research for this thesis revealed that the Iraqi Kurdish push for political self-governance has not been a social movement

per se. While the KDP and PUK organizations extended beyond just political actions, they eventually coalesced to form the Kurdish Regional Government. They operated as armed political parties; however, they were also voluntary, self-generating organizations that were autonomous from the Iraqi government when they were revolting against Baghdad. They were thus, arguably, key components of Kurdish civil society. Members of each organization enjoyed large amounts of bonding social capital, and the KDP and PUK also have demonstrated their capacity for bridging social capital whenever they band together to accomplish a greater task. This was demonstrated when launched coordinated rebellions against Saddam Hussein in 1983, 1991, and 2003.

The KDP and PUK are encompassed by Habermas' conception of civil society as organizations that observe and listen to the desires of their constituents and then transmit them. At times they did this via political negotiations with Baghdad, but they also resorted to violence in the face of authoritarian pressure. Nevertheless, both groups remained committed to democratic self-governance, though the definition of this ranged from limited local autonomy to full independence, depending on the time and social climate. Both organizations were engaged in collective action, and they both acted according to their own conceptions of the public good.

One major complaint of the KDP, however, is the fact that it has a hierarchical structure that puts the Barzani patriarch at the top of the

organization. The PUK has more flexibility, but it is still a hierarchical organization that places those at the top in charge of all policy decisions. This form of administration does little to inculcate political skills, especially as many of the leaders from both organizations are members of the Kurdish elite, either by tribal affiliation or by education. Thus, Fung's observations of movements becoming schools for democracy does not neatly apply in this case study.

Curiously, the PUK was initially founded in part because of unwillingness of Mustafa and Masoud Barzani to more aggressively push for Kurdish independence. Since the two parties formed a coalition government in 2004, both organizations have been at times leery of the move for independence. Perhaps this is because the party elites recognize the power that they enjoy both in Baghdad and in the KRG, but they have recently started discussing independence as a result of renewed grassroots pressure and the political opportunities created by the security issues that plague Iraq.

The KRG as a whole recognizes that it must calculate the Turkish government into any independence bid. While the Kurds and Turks have had fractious relations, the KRG and Turkey enjoy relatively good political and economic relations, as discussed previously. These connections might have had a radical-flank effect on the PUK, as it is no longer as aggressively supportive of the Syrian and Turkish Kurdish movements. As Walzer

describes, however, political autonomy has made the KDP and PUK, the strongest two actors in the KRG, even stronger rather than distributing power more equally. The KRG, however, is no longer a two party state or a political duality. This demonstrates the openness of the KRG to accede to internal social pressures and change in a democratic way rather than through the authoritarianism that the Barzanis often employed.

As internal political divisions have largely been put aside in the face of the existential threat that is the current insurgency, the KRG has been able to treat with the United States, Turkey, and Iran in a series of pragmatic diplomatic efforts. Although all three nations have at some point worked to suppress elements of the KDP and PUK, they still have been able to utilize their historical connections and social capital to engage diverse regional and international powers as they fight insurgents and solidify their gains.

With current instability in the Kurdish regions of Turkey, the Turkish government might be willing to support an Iraqi Kurdistan as a way to counterbalance the PKK. While Iran and the United States both seem to desire Iraq's borders to remain as they are, an independent Kurdistan could improve regional stability as they have ties with partners throughout the region and have been a firm opponent to terrorism, launching effective military and intelligence operations.

Although not a traditional social movement, the movement for an independent Kurdistan has created a relatively united coalition of interests.

The Barzani clan and its allies might dominate the KDP, but the PUK continues to represent a number of political ideologies, including social-democrats, free market capitalists, and progressives. Further, the two groups, and the KRG in general, are representative of Kurds from both rural communities and the cities. In addition, the KRG has reserved 10% of parliamentary seats for ethnic minorities, namely Turkmens and Assyrians. They have attempted to make a government that is representative of all people living within the KRG, from communists to Islamic fundamentalists. Maintaining this pluralist society and continuing to promote social capital between groups will be important should the Kurds in Iraq finally achieve the century long struggle for an independent Kurdistan.

3.0 Concluding Thoughts

These two case studies demonstrate that ethnic minority groups that have been historically excluded from the political process can achieve some form of democratic self-governance by creating social movements and similar organizational forms. The Zapatista movement and the EZLN began their campaign for autonomy and political freedoms with an offensive military campaign; however, the leadership quickly endorsed a political solution when international outrage forced the Mexican military to cease its harsh crackdown. The Zapatistas actively engaged not with foreign governments, but with INGOs and grassroots supporters. This gave them both the media attention that forced the Mexican government into political negotiations and the resources the EZLN requires to continue administering its parallel system of autonomous government.

Alternatively, the Kurds in Iraq have focused on engaging in a series of military offensives and gathering international political support from a diverse coalition of partners. While not a traditional social movement, the Iraqi Kurds have demonstrated many of the hallmarks that researchers look for in such a movement. Despite historical animosity, the KRG has engaged with Turkey and created a number of bilateral trade agreements that allow the autonomous region to sell its oil while importing finished goods and securing infrastructure investments.

At the same time, the Iraqi Kurds have maintained relations with Iran, a nation that expelled Mustafa Barzani and his followers only to provide him and his son with weapons and supplies in their fights with Baghdad. Despite military stalemates and losses, the Kurds continued to push for greater autonomy and self-governance. While they secured some concessions from Baghdad under both Qasim and Hussein, the KDP and PUK frequently fought for greater rights and freedoms. Although the KDP has at times been slow to aggressively push for more than autonomy and the Barzanis have frequently sought to consolidate their own power at the expense of political rivals, they have remained committed to Kurdish freedom for over 70 years, since the formation of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946.

Another difference has been how each movement has framed itself. The EZLN contends that both its leadership and its followers are primarily poor indigenous subsistence farmers. They position themselves not as the defenders of all of Mexico's indigenous, but as a local movement that has stood in solidarity with other groups suffering the same indignities. The Zapatistas have always contended that both their fight and their goals are local to Chiapas. This might have constrained their geographical effectiveness to a single state, but the EZLN was able to build and maintain their coalition of support even when their leadership was under siege in the Lacandon Jungle. At the same time, the EZLN has emerged from Chiapas to gain additional support and broadcast its ideology to sympathetic audiences.

In the 2005 *La otra campaña* (The Other Campaign), Subcomandante Marcos traveled around Mexico and presented the EZLN's anti-neoliberal ideology and proposals to include constitutional protections and rights for the indigenous to various scholars, unions, and political parties (Marcos, 2006).

The self-reported reason for this campaign was to force the federal government to include the protections for indigenous Mexicans that they had agreed to in the San Andres Accords a decade previous while also seeking to eliminate the neoliberal trade policies, like NAFTA, that the EZLN had long campaigned against. At the same time, this tour also gave the Zapatista movement increased exposure in areas where their framing of the EZLN was likely facing significant pushback from the federal government. This allowed the Zapatistas to add new partners and increase their bridging social capital with a wider audience.

Further, the Zapatista movement spent years formalizing support and forging agreements among distinct indigenous groups and within the local *mestizo* population. Utilizing both pre-existing indigenous political structures and the structure that the Liberation Theology of the Catholic Church had already constructed, the EZLN has been able to create and maintain both bonding and bridging social capital throughout all stages of the movement's history. The movement's partnerships of both local and international collaborators has created strong social capital bonds that they can rely on for both material and political support.

The Zapatista movement has shown little progress towards the *de jure* autonomy they have sought for over twenty years. While attacks from right-wing paramilitary groups have declined, infrequent strikes on EZLN members and supporters still occur without government investigation or repercussion. It seems unlikely that the Zapatista movement will move beyond its current territorial holdings, and there is a risk that support will decline as longtime international allies and supporters age. The movement continues to invite young activists from Mexico and around the world to observe and participate in the movement, potentially mitigating this, however. Nevertheless, internal support has not translated to increased recognition or further political engagement.

Meanwhile, the KRG has made strides towards independence since securing near-total autonomy through the Iraqi constitution. With their international allies and contacts, the Kurds in Iraq have forged political support that would likely translate into immediate and widespread recognition of statehood.

While Masoud Barzani and other Kurdish officials might privately wish to remain an autonomous federal state within Iraq, the KDP and PUK have both demonstrated that they are responsive to the desires of the populace. With a powerful opposition party in the KRG parliament, Barzani and his allies are unlikely to oppose independence for fear of losing popular support. With the promise of a referendum for independence in 2016, the

KRG has only months to ensure a peaceful transition out of Iraq should the populace support such a move. This is arguably the best time for such a transition as the Kurds enjoy wide and enthusiastic support from the international community. Further, the Iraqi government is in a relatively weak position to block a Kurdish exit.

The Iraqi military and the Shiite militias are focused on defeating Daesh and other insurgent groups, and they lack the manpower or political clout to attempt to force the Kurds to remain a part of Iraq. Alternatively, the Kurds could come under international pressure to remain part of Iraq for some of these same reasons. Should a referendum for independence pass, the already weak government of Abadi could be further undermined and invite additional instability. Nevertheless, it seems likely that, should the referendum for independence pass, there will be a sovereign Kurdish state for the first time since the short-lived Republic of Mahabad.

The main difference between these two cases is the commitment to ideology. The Zapatistas and the Iraqi Kurds are pursuing democratic reforms that will lead to either total political autonomy or independence, but their strategies for securing support is markedly different. The EZLN has a set ideology that prospective partners must agree to at least accept, if not operate under. The Iraqi Kurds, especially the KRG, are ideologically flexible and are often willing to change priorities if it means increased support and political patronage, from disavowing the PKK to shedding far left ideology.

3.1 Future Work: An Examination of the Syrian Kurds

As it becomes increasingly likely that the Iraqi Kurds will have an independent nation in a matter of years, another group of Kurds has started a campaign for autonomy. The Democratic Union Party (PYD), and its People's Protection Units (YPG), is currently engaged in a struggle against Daesh, al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JaN), and various other Islamist factions in Syria. This case presents an interesting parallel to both the Zapatista movement and to the KRG. With a similar radical democratic ideology as the EZLN, the PYD has installed local councils composed of both Arabs and Kurds whenever they take new territory. They then promote local self-governance much like the EZLN (International Crisis Group, 2014).

Furthermore, the Syrian Kurds have publicly stated on numerous occasions that they only desire autonomy from Damascus. There has been no talk of independence, though this might be for pragmatic reasons as the Assad regime has repeatedly declared that their only conception of victory is a reunified Syria (Black and Shaheen, 2016). Still, the regime will likely be forced to accept an autonomous Kurdish region in the north should it survive the Syrian Civil War. While the YPG have taken many losses, they have become an effective fighting force and are relatively well armed.

Like the KRG, the PYD has sought to engage with numerous nations in a pragmatic manner. While this engagement comes primarily as a way for nations like the United States to combat Daesh, the Syrian Kurds are gaining

numerous political allies and cultivating considerable social capital. The PYD has engaged numerous nations, often appearing to play both sides (Shamsulddin, 2015). While the US arms and provides the YPG with close air support against Daesh, they have also allied themselves with Russia, who provides these same services against rebel groups that the US is unwilling to strike.

Thus, the YPG has been able to make territorial gains across the Kurdish cantons of Syria. Indeed, the YPG only needs to conquer a few more towns and cities (certainly not an easy feat) before they connect the eastern cantons to the currently isolated Afrin. Once this happens, the Syrian Kurds will hold virtually the entire Syrian/Turkish border. While the Syrian regime is in no position to block such territorial expansion, Assad does maintain a truce with the PYD and nominally recognizes their political authority. This acceptance of an armed Kurdish actor follows decades of political and ethnic repression from both Bashar and his father Hafez, including Arabization programs similar to those instituted by Saddam Hussein in Kirkuk and Mosul (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

One major impediment to even an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria is Turkey. Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) have taken a hardline stance against the Syrian Kurds, a group he sees as an extension of the Turkish PKK. While not entirely inaccurate, the PYD has worked recently to distance itself from the PKK. Nevertheless, Turkey

continues to shell Kurdish positions in Syria, despite the YPG's struggle against Daesh (Uras, 2016).

While the United States, Russia, and much of Europe support the PYD, it is unknown whether they will protect the region from Turkish aggression once the civil war concludes. At the moment, the AKP can only attack via artillery and machine gun fire as the Russians have publicly stated they will shoot down any Turkish military planes that violate Syrian airspace. For the moment, these assurances serve to protect the PYD as its YPG units advance.

Should the PYD be able to finish connecting the Kurdish cantons, they will be in a powerful position when the war concludes. Not only have they politically engaged with local populations that they liberate from Daesh and JaN, the YPG has also organized a collective military force that includes ethnic Arabs and minorities from the lands they administer. This organization is known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and includes numerous militias composed of Arab, Assyrian, and Turkmen fighters. The bonds being formed in this umbrella military organization, and its recently established political wing called the Syrian Democratic Assembly, could prove to be a decisive factor in the PYD's ambition for an autonomous state. Because many of these minority groups have large populations throughout the Kurdish lands in northern Syria, any political arrangement must include all of them to succeed.

The potential autonomous Kurdish state in Syria would be an ideal future case study as it represents a hybrid of the EZLN and KRG cases examined in this thesis. The PYD has many of the social movement hallmarks that typified the Zapatista case study, but it also includes many of the ethnic and military components that have dominated the Iraqi Kurdish push for independence. The PYD claims that they only seek autonomy, like the Zapatistas, but they are also establishing a majority Kurdish state like the KDP and PUK accomplished.

Like in Chiapas, the PYD is establishing local councils to govern from the bottom, but they are also engaging with as many international governments as possible, a technique they might well have learned from the KRG. The Syrian Civil War is far from concluded, and it is possible that the situation could change dramatically; however, the potential pluralist, autonomous Kurdish state could become an exciting and useful case study in the examination of how ethnic minority and politically marginalized groups gain self-governance in the face of authoritarian rule. Like the KRG case study, this examination of the PYD would likely conclude that this Kurdish movement cannot neatly fit the mold of a social movement, but again, many social movement trends will likely be revealed while also illuminating the importance of both bonding and bridging social capital.

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Curriculum Vitae

Ian Ermatinger-Salas

Experience:

Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indianapolis, Indiana

August 2015-Present

Graduate Assistant to the Dean

- Conduct research on various topics, write reports, and build internal stakeholder consensus on works including a proposal for a graduate degree program and an alumni engagement strategy.
- Co-plan bi-annual Board of Visitors meetings and assist in running them, ensuring positive board relations and satisfaction. Identified areas of cost reduction, resulting in thousands in savings.
- Plan and handle logistics migrating the *Tocqueville Program* to the School of Philanthropy. Set local program priorities and co-write grant proposals (\$33,000 in successful proposals in 2016).

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Graduate Office, Indiana *January 2015- Present*

Grant Writing Graduate Assistant, IUPUI GradGrants Coordinator

- Develop program curriculum and teach workshops on effective grant proposal techniques. Create resources and guides for students and staff to improve submission rates and funding success.
- Provide full-service grant proposal assistance, from locating funding opportunities to reviewing and editing drafts up until final submission.
- Co-conduct research on graduate student curriculum and present findings at practitioner conferences.

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois *June-August 2015 & July 2012*

Development Intern (2015), Alumni Relations Intern (2012)

- Conducted prospect research, attended prospect management meetings, and briefed leadership on findings before multiple successful major gift solicitations.
- Conducted an audit of the total development program and proposed ways in which collaborative approaches within could assist in fundraising, leading to positive change.
- Researched and wrote a report on engaging Latino donors (a large segment of NEIU's community) and a best practices report on reunions for Alumni Relations, utilized in subsequent reunions.

US-UK Fulbright Commission, London, England *January- April 2013*

Awards and Alumni Relations Intern

- Created an alumni reengagement strategy focusing on membership and fundraising practices which was accepted and implemented by the board.
- Conducted database tests during the migration to Raiser's Edge, identifying data leaks and mistakes.
- Processed Fulbright applications and identified incomplete documents for review and resubmission.

Education:

Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy 2014-2016

- Master of Arts in Philanthropic Studies, June 2016, GPA 3.90/4.00
Selected Coursework: *Principles & Practices of Fundraising, Foundations & Grantmaking*
- Recipient of University Fellowship

IES London, London UK Spring 2013

- Study Abroad and Internship Program

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 2010-2014

- Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science, awarded May 2014, GPA 3.63/4.00
Selected Coursework: *Classical Political Thought, Fund Development, Economic Inequality in the US*
- Indiana University Excellence Scholarship recipient, Founders Scholar, Dean's List, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Hutton Honors College, Hudson and Holland Scholar

Volunteer Work:

- Thomas Jefferson School Alumni Association, Fundraising Committee. *July 2013-Present*
- Hudson & Holland Alumni Association, Co-President. *December 2014-Present*
- Participated in a scholarship contest and won an award to volunteer overseas: traveled to Ghana to investigate child labor in March 2016. Coached and mentored other participants on effective presentation delivery.